

**Western Mass Food Processing Center**  
**Getting Started:**  
**A Checklist for Launching Your Food Venture.**

Congratulations! You have taken an important step in bringing your new food product to market. The Food Center is here to help guide you along the path to the launch of your product. As a Member, you can take advantage of complete technical support including business planning, product development, regulatory compliance, manufacturing, marketing, and distribution. You will have access to our shipping, receiving, storage, and processing facilities. And not least of all you will have access to a network of other small- and medium-scale food ventures under the same roof.

This packet is intended to provide useful general information and resources to employ in starting your business. Your product may have additional steps or regulatory requirements not included here. The Program Manager will be happy to help you with the details of your product.

We appreciate your interest in The Food Center, and we look forward to working with you to develop your concept. If there is any additional information that you require, please feel free to contact us.

Wishing you success,

Herb Heller  
Food Processing Center Program Manager

## Getting Started Checklist

This checklist is provided as a reference for you as to the sequence of the steps involved in getting to the point where you are legal for manufacturing and distributing your product. For assistance in areas of manufacturing, marketing, and distribution, please work with the Program Manager to address your specific needs.

- ☐ Business Plan
  - Gather your ideas and goals into a single document
  - Answer important questions, including:
    - Can you make enough profit to justify the risk?
    - How much profit do you need to make to achieve your goals?
    - How many units do you need to sell to break even?
    - How much money will you need to get started?
    - What will you do if the business is successful?
  - Provide yourself with a “road map” to achieving your goals.
- ☐ Product Development
  - Small batch testing
  - Scheduled process development
  - Lab analysis and process review
  - Scale-up and testing
- ☐ Regulatory
  - Labeling
  - Licensing
    - State: Wholesale
    - Local: Retail
    - USDA: Meat products for wholesale
    - FDA:
      - Certain processes including acidification (pickling)
      - Bioterrorism Act: Domestic Food Producer Registration
  - Product Liability Insurance
    - General Liability with finished goods coverage
    - Minimum \$1,000,000 per occurrence/\$2,000,000 Aggregate
    - CDC/Food Center as additional insured.

## GET COOKING!

### IMPORTANT CONTACTS

#### **Business Plan Resources**

Franklin County CDC  
324 Wells St.  
Greenfield, MA 01301  
Amy Shapiro: (413) 774-7204 x117

MA Small Business Development Center  
[www.msbdc.org](http://www.msbdc.org)

Western Mass Enterprise Fund  
[www.wmef.org](http://www.wmef.org)

State-wide CDC listings:  
[www.macdc.org](http://www.macdc.org)

#### **Product Development Resources**

##### **Laboratory Analysis/Process Review**

Office of Dr. Downing  
ATTN: Judy Anderson  
Cornell University/NYSAES  
West North St.  
Geneva, NY 14456  
(315) 787-2273

Vallid Labs, Inc.  
295 Silver St.  
Agawam, MA 01001  
413-789-2206

Microbac  
Daniel Ste. Marie  
120 Bartlett St.  
Marlborough, MA 01752  
508-460-7600

##### **General Food Business Resources**

Northeast Center for Food  
Entrepreneurship  
[www.nysaes.cornell.edu/necfe](http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/necfe)

New England Extension Food Safety Service  
[www.umass.edu/nefe/](http://www.umass.edu/nefe/)

#### **Regulatory Resources**

##### **State Agencies (MA ONLY)**

Department of Public Health  
Food Protection Program  
[www.mass.gov/dph/fpp/fpp.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dph/fpp/fpp.htm)

Department of Agricultural Resources  
Bonita Oehlke  
251 Causeway St., Suite 500  
Boston, MA 02114  
(617) 626-1753  
[www.mass.gov/agr/](http://www.mass.gov/agr/)

##### **Federal Agencies**

##### **US Food & Drug Administration**

<http://www.fda.gov/>

FDA Food Facility Registration:  
[www.cfsan.fda.gov/~furls/ovffreg.html](http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~furls/ovffreg.html)

FDA Prior Notice of Imports:  
[www.cfsan.fda.gov/~pn/pnoview.html](http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~pn/pnoview.html)

FDA Label Regulations:  
<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/label.html>

FDA New England District Office  
One Montvale Avenue  
Stoneham, MA 02180  
(781) 596-7779

##### **US Department of Agriculture**

Food Safety Inspection Service  
<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/>

US Customs Service  
[www.customs.ustras.gov/xp/cgov/import](http://www.customs.ustras.gov/xp/cgov/import)

##### **Insurance**

(For Members of the Food Center Only)

*Food Processors Plan*  
Rose & Kiernan  
498 State Route 3  
Plattsburgh, NY 12901  
800-830-0705

## **Business Plan Outline**

*Reprinted from "The Massachusetts Food Processors Resource Manual", available online at [www.mass.gov/agr/markets/specfood/food\\_processor\\_resource\\_manual.htm](http://www.mass.gov/agr/markets/specfood/food_processor_resource_manual.htm) courtesy of the Mass Department of Agricultural Resources*

This outline is intended for use as a general reference for writing your own business plan. You may need to adapt this plan to meet your specific needs. Consult the Program Manager for assistance using this outline.

### **1. Describe your product or service.**

- a. Describe the product physically, or describe what your service will do for people.
- b. What makes your product or service different?
- c. How will it help a consumer?
- d. Why would someone buy your product?
- e. Is it easy to use?

### **2. Describe your market.**

Your goal in this section is to convince a skeptic that there is a strong market for your product, and that consumers will pay your price. This research will help you to determine how much of your product you can sell, where you can sell it, how much you can charge for it, and how you'll get it to the consumer.

- a. Identify your customers by age, income, sex, preferences, etc.
- b. Where are they located geographically? How will you get your product to them by mail, in multiple retail locations, at your facility? And what costs does that method entail?
- c. How do you know these people want your product?
- d. Discuss how you will set your price, and how it relates to competitors prices.
- e. What market share do you expect to get? And why?
- f. What are potential problems in meeting this goal, and how will you deal with them?
- g. How will you get the word out about your company and your product?
- h. Who are your competitors now? In five years? How does your product compare with theirs, and how can you best compete with their products?

### **3. Describe yourself and your management team.**

- a. Your personal data: age, where you live, and have lived, special abilities and interests, your reasons for starting the business.
- b. What is your business background and experience do you have directly related experience?
- c. What is your educational background?
- d. Do you have any managerial experience?
- e. Who else is on your management team? What are their backgrounds?
- f. What functions will be performed by the team? Do you have the skills needed?

### **4. Describe your personnel.**

- a. What are your personnel needs, now and in the future?
- b. What skills must they have, and are such people available in the area?
- c. Will you need to train your employees? If so, how much will it cost, in both time and money?
- d. How many fulltime and parttime workers will you have, and what will your pay scale and benefits program be?

### **5. Describe your financial needs.** (The plan must be accompanied by a personal financial statement.)

- a. How much do you need?
- b. How is the money to be spent? (Working capital, new equipment, inventory, supplies, etc.)

## Scheduled Process Form

Company:	
Contact:	
Address:	
City, State, Zip	
Telephone:	
Fax:	
Cell:	

Batch/Lot #			
Product:			
Production Date:			
Start Time:		End Time:	
<b>Critical Limits</b>		<b>Results</b>	
Max pH:		pH	
BRIX:		BRIX:	
Fill Temp:		Fill Temp:	

# INGREDIENTS:		Yield =				Scale to Yield =	
		Quantity	Unit	Weight (lb)	% wt	Factor	Weight
1							
2							
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10							
<b>TOTALS</b>							

### PROCEDURE:

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# SAMPLE Scheduled Process Form

Company:	Your company info here		
Contact:			
Address:			
City, State, Zip			
Telephone:			
Fax:			
Cell:			

Yield of scaled version

Batch/Lot#: Record batch info here			
Product: Name of the product			
Production Date:			
Start Time:		End Time:	
Critical Limits		Results	
Max pH:		pH	
BRIX:		BRIX:	
Fill Temp:		Fill Temp:	

# INGREDIENTS:		Yield = Yield of base recipe				Scale to=	
		Quantity	Unit	Weight (lb)	% wt	Factor	Weight
1	Water	1	gallon	8	100.00%	6	48
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
TOTALS				8	100.00%		48

Multiple of original recipe to be used for scaled-up version.

## PROCEDURE:

1	Detail each step in your process.
2	Describe the manner in which ingredients should be prepared (chop, dice, puree, etc.)
3	Detail any critical limits that must be reached during processing. For example:
4	Hydrate powder in water for at least 2 hours. Record Times here. From: to:
5	Describe any handling the finished product will receive: type of container, volume, label, etc.
6	Indicate what, if any, statements appear on the label: Refrigerate after opening, Use bydate, etc.
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8	Make a new sheet for each product and each version of the product during development, and
9	for each production batch. Keep records for 2 years. Keep a sample of the product as well.
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12	Send this form to the lab for review, and for measurements of pH, Water Activity, or other
13	testing as appropriate.
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## Insurance Information

The Western Mass Food Processing Center requires that members carry product liability insurance and workers compensation insurance if you plan to use employees at the Center.

The Center does not endorse or require the use of any particular agency or underwriter. However, the company below offers a policy for Food Center Members for a \$350 annual premium. Please inquire directly to the number below, and tell the agent that you are a member of the food Processing Center..

### **Rose & Kiernan, Inc.**

498 State Route 3  
Plattsburgh, NY 12901  
Ph: (518) 561-4700  
Toll-free: 800-830-0705

### **Minimum coverage required to operate at the Center:**

- Each Occurrence \$1,000,000
- General Aggregate \$2,000,000
- Franklin County CDC / Western Mass food Processing Center must be named on the policy as an additional insured.
- A copy of your current insurance certificate is required prior to making product(s) for public consumption.

Worker's Compensation and Employers Liability must be carried members plan to use employees.

Business Automobile insurance, including non-owned and hired is required in the amount of \$1,000,000 (CSL) if you use any vehicles in the conduct of your business.

Copies of all insurances carried for your business are required by the Center.